

MAN'S CONTRACT WITH GOD

IN

BAPTISM.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

REV. P. J. EUDES,

FOUNDER AND FIRST SUPERIOR OF THE "CONGREGATION OF JESUS AND MARY," AND OF "OUR LADY OF CHARITY AND REFUGE."

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With the approbation of

THE RT. REV. BISHOP OF PHILADELPHIA.



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P R E F A C E.

*To the Congregation of St. Bridget's Church,
Falls of Schuylkill :*

WHEREAS, our neighborhood has lately been the theatre of a somewhat angry controversy on the subject of Baptism, which has been conducted with considerable *eclat* between two pulpits of our separated brethren ; and whereas this discussion was marked by a no greater amount of charity than is usually exhibited on similar occasions, each minister setting forth his most powerful arguments for and against the sprinkling and immersion system, and, of course, using *Popery* as his Cheshire cheese ; and whereas the opprobrious epithets, applied to this most holy sacrament, became the general *cant* of the community, I have considered the following Treatise on Baptism as the most essential for *you* at the present time, and that it would afford most edifying instruction to the Catholic public in general.

It will, I feel confident, serve as a vessel of unction to comfort your souls, while it will

also prepare you "to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason for the faith that is in you."

It may appear like adding a vestibule to a sentry-box, to attach a preface to so small a work; yet, as it is as necessary, as it is customary, with men who invite public attention, to offer some explanatory remarks relative to the subject-matter which they are about to lay before it, or in other words, to give a preface, I shall offer a few observations relative to the task, which was to me pleasing, though somewhat laborious, such as must ever be the lot of him who undertakes to transfer the thoughts and sentiments of any person from one language to another.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that this is the first appearance of the work in plain English uniform—that it has been stripped of its own French costume—and that this has not been accomplished without its own quantum of labor.

Of the real merits of the work I need say nothing, as I am sure the name of its pious and learned author, Rev. P. J. Eudes, will be a fitter recommendation than any praise which the translator might feel disposed to bestow. Still there is one fact which requires particular notice, and that is, that the work had not been published during the lifetime of

the author; and, though the present edition had been afterwards corrected and enlarged, by a clergyman of the same congregation, it is, after all, without system, and the language poor, and frequently ungrammatical, whilst the *thoughts* stand forth like half-clad giants, that seem to terrify us by an exhibition of strength, though we are almost tempted to laugh at their nudity. Passages of Scripture are paraphrased, and sometimes garbled and strung together, almost in the same sentences, without either note or reference, from the different books of the sacred Scriptures, in a way which renders them almost unintelligible. I have endeavored to establish order throughout the work, and to make it clear and interesting to the reader.

In the beginning, I was of opinion that it would be too onerous a task to undertake the labor of giving direct citations of the Scriptures, and noting down the chapter and verse where each passage might be found; but I soon discovered that it was necessary to do so, in order that the reader might the more easily comprehend them, and to afford him greater facility for consulting the sacred text himself. I have also added some passages of Scripture, where I found the original required it.

With regard to the translation itself: of

course, the difference of idiom between the two languages makes it impossible to render it wholly literal, and, in some cases, nothing more than the mere germ of the thought is retained; but, on the whole, I feel confident that it is a useful work, and will, if studied with care, do much to benefit Christian souls.

It might, of course, require a more accurate revision previous to publication; but, upon reflection, I have come to the conclusion, although I know you are not reeds to be shaken by the wind, that it should be presented to you at once, in order to counteract, as soon as possible, any disedification which the disrespectful language of others for so holy a sacrament may have occasioned you. May it realize the wishes of

Your devoted Pastor,

J. M. C.

MAN'S CONTRACT WITH GOD.

CHAPTER I.

The evils which follow from man's ignorance of the obligations which he contracts with God in Baptism.

How often have we been obliged to witness, in the every-day occurrences of human life, scenes which should call forth tears of blood, in beholding the many persons who, after having become by Baptism the children of God, the members of Jesus Christ and the living temples of the Holy Ghost, yet live rather as infidels and pagans than as true Christians. In truth, do we not behold men live, as if neither faith, nor reason, made any impression upon them, who, wholly occupied with the world and its vanities, seek nothing beyond the gratification of their own passions,

and who, allowing themselves to be entirely carried away by evil, have no more respect for God than pagans? If these persons perform any act of religion, it is only in compliance with the family routine, or following the habits acquired in early youth, while they are strangers to the spirit of true piety.

How vividly are the characters of such persons depicted by St. Paul, in speaking of the carnal Jews: "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. All have turned out of the way, they are become unprofitable together: there is none that doeth good, there is not so much as one. Their throat is an open sepulchre,—with their tongues they have dealt deceitfully. The venom of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are their ways: and the way of peace they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes."*

To what cause, then, must we attribute this

* Rom., 3d chap., 11th and 18th verses.

deplorable forgetfulness of God? If we examine the subject attentively, we shall find that there are three great causes which mortally affect society in all its religious tendencies, namely:—unchristian education, unmortified passions, and bad example. In the first, the good seed which had been sown in Baptism, and which should have been nourished and protected by faith and good works, either withers away for want of the moisture of grace, or is “choked with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and yields no fruit.” The second, not only infects the soul with the deadly leprosy of sin, but, like a moral plague, rages through all its faculties, and communicates its disease to every thought, word, and action of the whole man. Bad example is the great stumbling-block in the way of virtue. It is a poison which infects the life-blood of society, and causes thousands of souls to perish daily.

But the primary, and great cause of this forgetfulness of God, and, therefore, of the deplorable state of society, and of the destruction of innumerable souls, is the ignorance in

which men live of the obligations contracted by them in Baptism.

In Baptism, the Christian is incapable of comprehending the great and important obligations which he contracts, and when he arrives at an age to understand them, the instructions which he receives are oftentimes too limited to make him fully acquainted with his awful responsibilities.

We are taught that, in Baptism, we are cleansed from original sin; made children of God and of the Church. But, what does this incomparable character of child of God impose on us? What promises are required of us when we receive this name? How indispensably necessary is it for us to fulfil faithfully these promises? What shall we do to preserve the grace of so salutary a sacrament? What blessings await those who preserve it, and what must be the guilt of those who lose it through mortal sin?

These are matters in which the Christian needs instruction, and the ignorance and forgetfulness of which cause the loss of innumerable souls, and disgrace the Church by the

dissolute and scandalous lives of so many of her children. For how is it possible that Christians should fall into such disorders, or lead such scandalous lives as so many do, if they only bore in mind that they had made a contract with God, in which they had promised never to enter into sin, and to maintain inviolable fidelity to the divine Majesty; if they only thought that in violating this promise they should lose the grace which God had given them in Baptism, and forfeit the right which they had acquired to the inheritance of eternal life, and become again the children and slaves of Satan.

These are the considerations which have induced me to lay before the faithful, the holy and sacred treaty which they entered into with God in their Baptism, in order that, examining it in detail, they might understand the obligations which it contains, and that they might fully comprehend the duty of one who has received Baptism.

The following chapter will show what God is to him, and what he is to God; what the dignity and sanctity of his state;

what life he ought to lead; what glory awaits him in Heaven if he lives a good Christian, and what punishments are destined for him if he does not faithfully fulfil all the promises which he made to God.

CHAPTER II.

That there is a special contract made between God and man in Baptism.

THE name of contract is given to any agreement entered into by two or more persons, in which the parties contracting incur mutual obligations. This clearly shows that a contract has been entered into by the most Blessed Trinity and you in Baptism; since you have incurred many obligations towards the Blessed Trinity, and the Blessed Trinity has also obliged itself in regard to you. What is the nature of this contract? It is a reciprocal contract of gifts, the highest and most entire

that can "enter into the heart of man to conceive;" for in making it you are obliged to give yourself entirely and forever to God; you have renounced all things to be united to Him, and for Him, and God on his part has given himself entirely to you. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, come to you and take up their abode in your soul, in order to confer honors and benefits on you. They enrich you with spiritual treasures to render you worthy of their three divine Persons.

It is a contract of adoption, since God the Father has taken you for his child, and has conferred on you the right of his inheritance with his only Son, and you have taken God for your Father, and have promised to entertain for him all the love and respect which a child owes to so good a parent. "Consider," writes St. John the Evangelist, "what love the Father has testified to you in wishing that you should be called, and that you should, really, be his children."*

Behold the admirable effect of the contract

* 1st Ep. John, 3d chap., 1st verse.

which you have made with God in Baptism, from being the child of wrath and an heir of hell, you have become the child of God and an heir to Heaven! What should you not do to acknowledge this infinite goodness of God in your regard?

It is a contract of alliance with the Son of God, since in receiving Baptism you have united yourself to him as to your head, your master, and your sovereign, and since the Son has taken you for his servant and one of the members of his body, which is his Church. How great is the goodness of God, says St. Paul to the newly converted Christians of Corinth; "By whom you are called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."*

What were you before Baptism but the unhappy slave of Satan, and subject like him to eternal punishment? But by Baptism you have been delivered from this unhappy subjection, through the divine alliance which you have contracted with Jesus Christ, which procures you the enjoyment of eternal happiness, if you observe all its conditions.

* Cor., 1st chap., 9th verse.

Finally, it is a contract of alliance with the Person of the Holy Ghost; for faith teaches us, that the Holy Ghost takes the Christian soul as his spouse, and that the Christian reciprocally takes the Holy Ghost for his spouse. In consequence of this sacred alliance, the Holy Ghost calls you "his sister and his spouse," and as, of yourself, you are poor indeed, he adorns your soul with all the gifts necessary to render it worthy of him, and he comes to take up his abode in it, and to consecrate it as his temple and his sanctuary.

Can we be astonished after this, if St. Louis preferred so much his character of Christian to that of King of France? He considered that his royal birth procured him only a connection with mortal men, and that it gave him only a transient crown, whilst his Baptism, in making him a Christian, elevated him to an alliance with the three Persons of the most adorable Trinity, and gave him a right to an eternal crown in Heaven.

Since our Baptism elevates us to the same dignity, and procures us the same benefits, however poor and miserable we may be in this

world, let us endeavor to enter into the sentiments and dispositions of this great Saint; esteeming more our character of Christians, than all the pomps of the world; fearing more to break the holy alliance which we have contracted with God, than even the loss of life itself. Let us say, with the Apostle St. Paul: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation; or distress; or famine; or nakedness; or danger; or persecution; or the sword?"*

Oh, admirable disposition of this Holy Apostle, prepared to suffer every pang of human misery, rather than risk the love which he had for Jesus Christ! and let us remember that it is our duty to imitate his example. We should value more our alliance with the blessed Trinity, than all the good things of this world; even more than life itself, since it elevates us above the great ones of the earth, and gives us a right to riches which are infinite and eternal: and we should dread more that which results from violating it, than all

* St. Paul to Rom., 8th chap., 35th verse.

the miseries which can be suffered in this life. Wherefore, neither the desire of temporal rewards, nor the fear of temporal punishments, should induce us to violate it.

CHAPTER III.

In which are explained the inestimable qualities of Man's Contract with God in Baptism.

THE Son of God, not content with breaking the unholy union which the sin of our first parents had formed between us and Satan, even condescends, through an excess of his love, to unite us in fellowship, through himself, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, as we are taught by St. John, when he says:—"That you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."* It is by Baptism that this fellowship, which is the

* 1st Ep. John, 1st chap., 3d verse.

noblest, and to us the most invaluable, has been established. It is not merely an alliance with that which is greatest, most honorable and most powerful on earth, but it is an alliance with the infinite majesty of God, before which all the grandeur of the world is as nothing.

It is an alliance the most intimate, for who can be more intimately united than the Father with his Son ; than the Head with its members ; than the spouse with the espoused. Jesus Christ compares it to the union which exists between the vine and its branches, when he says :—"I am the vine, you are the branches ; he that abideth in me, and I in him ; the same beareth much fruit ; for without me you can do nothing."* The union, therefore, between Jesus Christ and us in Baptism, is so intimate that we abide in Him, and He in us, so long as we preserve the grace of the sacraments.

Moreover, so complete is this union, that it may be regarded as an extension of the inef-

* John, 15th chap., 5th verse.

fable union of the sacred humanity of the Saviour, and the adorable person of the Son of God. Jesus Christ himself compares it to the union existing between him and his eternal Father, when he says:—"That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as we also are one. I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one."*

The union of the Father and the Son is therefore the model of that union which we contract with God by baptism, and is the image of that existing between the two divine persons themselves.

Oh, the sublime dignity of the Christian religion! Oh, the priceless treasures of holy Baptism! Oh, holy and sacred contract of God with man, and man with God! Oh! inconceivable honor bestowed on man! Not only is he delivered from the servitude of sin

* John, 17th chap., 21st to 23d verse.

and the tyranny of Satan, but he becomes a member of the household of God, and enjoys the liberty of his children.

Yes, dear reader, before your Baptism you were a member of Satan, and now you are a member of Jesus Christ; you were the child of the devil, and now you are the child of God; you were a base associate of Satan, and you have become the sacred spouse of the Holy Ghost; you were the inheritor of the pains of hell, and now you are the heir of heaven; you were separated from your God, and you are united to him in most intimate union. Behold what you are, if you have still preserved the grace of your Baptism. But, alas! if you have lost it through mortal sin, the holy union which you contracted with God is broken.

You have fallen anew into the unhappy state from which you had been raised, there to remain, unless, through the privilege which penance bestows upon you, you become re-established in grace, and enter again into a new alliance with God, after having renounced Satan and all his works and pomps.

CHAPTER IV.

The promises which God makes to the Christian in Baptism.

THE Eternal Father having done you the honor of associating you with himself, and taking you as one of his children, and one of the members of his Son Jesus Christ, obliged himself to regard you with the same care, and to love you with the same love, which he entertains for his own Son; for inasmuch as you are one of the members of his Son, you become one with him. Thus it is, that our Lord, speaking to his Father of those whom he had given him for his disciples, says:—
“And thou hast loved them, as thou hast also loved me. And I have made known thy name to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in thee.”*

* John, 17th chap., 23d and 26th verses.

Do you not, therefore, behold the wonderful effects of the love of your heavenly Father? Regard, then, as most beneficent, the ineffable gifts which he conferred on you in receiving you into his alliance, through the sacrament of Baptism. He enriched your soul with grace, the least degree of which surpasses all the empires of the world. He gave you faith, which is an inestimable good; he gave you charity, which is a treasure of incomparable value; he gave you hope, a gift which is beyond all price. He united in you all the other virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost, to enable you to practise all good works.

But that which is infinitely above all the other benefits, is, that he has given you himself, with his Son and the Holy Ghost, and that he comes to take up his abiding-place in your heart; in short, that if you have not driven him from your soul, you have always enjoyed the happiness of possessing him within you. Jesus Christ himself reveals this glorious truth to us in the following words:—"If any one love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and he will come to

him and will make an abode with him.”* His parental solicitude is constantly directed towards you, according to the language of the royal Prophet:—“I have fixed my eyes upon you.” His Spirit has been continually occupied thinking of you; his heart is always employed in loving you; his power, his wisdom, his bounty, never cease to protect you, and to do you infinite favors as well for the body as for the soul.

Moreover, this charitable Father tells us that we are “heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ.”† If you observe faithfully the conditions of your contract, you shall possess eternally the great and admirable benefits which “The eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.”‡

Whilst the Son gives you grace to enter into alliance with himself, and takes you as one of his members, he obliges himself to re-

* John, 14th chap., 23d verse.

† Rom., 8th chap., 17th verse.

‡ 1 Cor., 2d chap., 9th verse.

gard you, to love you and to treat you as part of himself; as bone of his bone, as flesh of his flesh; as spirit of his spirit, and as one with himself.

He incurs the following obligations:—First, To love you as he loves himself. Wherefore he addresses you in these admirable words:—“As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you,”* that is to say, I love you as I love myself. Second, To give his Eternal Father to be your Father. Thus he commands you to address him in your prayers:—“Our Father, who art in heaven.”† Speaking of his ascension, he says:—“I ascend to my Father, and to your Father.”‡ Third, To give you his holy Spirit and his heart, to become the spirit of your spirit, and the heart of your heart. To teach us this truth, he assures us by one of the Prophets, that he “has given us a new heart and a new spirit.”§

In desiring to make us understand what

* John, 15th chap., 9th verse.

† Math., 6th chap., 9th verse.

‡ John, 20th chap., 17th verse.

§ Azach, 36.

this new heart and new spirit is, he adds immediately afterwards: "I will send my Spirit in the midst of you."

Then, the Apostle St. Paul repeats the same truth, when he says, "And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."* Fourth, To give the Most Holy Virgin Mary, his mother, to be your mother. Wherefore, in speaking of her before his death, he says to you in the person of St. John, "Behold thy Mother." Fifth, To give you his church as a second mother. Thus St. Paul calls her our mother, when speaking of the Celestial Jerusalem, which he understands as the church: "But that Jerusalem, which is above, is free; which is our mother."† It is on this account that Jesus Christ commands us to regard him, as a pagan and a publican, who would not obey the church as a child should obey his parent. Sixth, To give you his flesh and blood in the blessed Eucharist, to be the nourishment of

* Gal., 4th chap., 6th verse.

† Gal., 4th chap., 26th verse.

your soul. For since the new life, which has been given you in Baptism, is altogether celestial and divine, as you have received it from Jesus Christ, who is your Head, it must be supported and preserved by heavenly nourishment, according to these beautiful words of St. Dennis the Areopagite: "Those who are of God, should live according to God." Jesus Christ himself says, "I am the bread of life; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me."* As if he had said, my life is the same as that of my Father; I live in Him, and He lives in me; whoever eats my flesh, and

* St. John, 6th chap., 48th, 52d, 55th, 56th, 57th and 58th verses.

drinks my blood, the same shall also live in me and I in him. The same Spirit which animates him animates me. He does not give me life, but I give it to him. He does not change me into him, but I change him into me. I shall be the principal of his life, for the glory of my Father and mine. Seventh, To give you a place with him in the bosom of his Father, where he abides. Since he asks for us this favor of his Father, when he says: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me, may be with me; that they may see my glory, which thou hast given me; because thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world."* Eighth, To give us to participate in the empire of that glory which his Father gives him, as he expresses it: "And I appoint to you, as my Father hath appointed to me, a kingdom."†

Ninth, To sit on his throne. This is what he promised when he said: "To him that shall overcome, I will grant to sit with me on

* John, 17th chap., 24th verse.

† John, 22d chap., 29th verse.

my throne: as I also have overcome, and have sat with my Father on his throne.”*

He makes you partakers of his noblest attributes; for if he is the Son of God, you are also the sons of God. Yes, my dear friends, St. John says: “Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God: and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be.”† We are therefore children of God in this life, but the glory which is due to us, is reserved for the next. When we shall possess this glory, then we shall no more doubt that we are the children of God. If he is the King of Kings, and the great High Priest, will he not make us participators of his royalty and of his priesthood, since St. Peter calls all Christians priests and kings: “You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.”‡ In quality of king, you exercise over your own passions, and over the vanities of the world, a spiritual empire; you triumph over the devil and the enemies of religion, to reign afterwards eternally in glory, like unto

* Rev., 3d chap., 21st verse.

† John, 3d chap., 2d verse.

‡ 1st Peter, 2d chap., 9th verse.

Christ himself. In virtue of your Priesthood, you offer to God spiritual holocausts, which are prayers, aspirations, and good works, in union with the sacrifice which Jesus Christ offers for us; and, during eternity, you will offer, with him, a sacrifice of praise to his Divine Majesty.

If he is the Sovereign Judge, will he not give, to his faithful servants, part of his authority to judge not only sinful men, but also the rebel angels, since he says: "Know you not that we shall judge angels? how much more things of this world."*

In fine, if he is God, will he not even communicate to you this supreme quality, in making you, by imitation and resemblance, that which He is by nature; for faith, grace, and the virtues which are given to us in baptism, are called, in Scripture, a participation of the divine nature, wherefore the name of God is given to all Christians who preserve in them these precious gifts: "I said ye are Gods."†

* 1st Cor., 6th chap., 3d verse.

† John, 10th chap., 34th verse.

These things, so great and so noble, will not astonish you if you consider that He who performs them is infinite power and infinite goodness. Since he wishes to unite himself in such a manner to you, that you become one with him, does it not follow that he should love you as himself, and that you should have with him the same Father, the same Mother, the same Spirit, the same heart, the same dwelling-place, the same royalty, the same glory, the same throne, and the same name.

Behold, then, my dear brother, the high obligations which your adorable Head binds himself to in your favor, when in Baptism he incorporates you with himself, as one of his members. Know that he calls himself "faithful and true,"—*fidelis et verax*,*—and that, consequently, he will accomplish faithfully all his promises, if you but acquit yourselves faithfully of yours.

The obligations which the Holy Ghost assumes, in your regard, are equally beneficent to you, since, having so far favored us as to take our souls for his temple and for his spouse,

* Rev. 21st chap., 5th verse.

he obliges himself to love us and to do for us every favor worthy of the dignity with which he honors us. He incurs, therefore, the obligation to purify the soul from sin ; he sanctifies it by his grace ; he enlightens it by his wisdom ; he communicates to it his love ; he strengthens it against its weaknesses ; he supports it in its combats, and he guides it by his inspirations, by enabling it to do good and to avoid evil ; he assists it in the execution of the pious resolutions with which he inspires it ; he directs it in the practice of virtue ; he renders it fruitful in every good work, and he raises it when it falls. Is not the fidelity with which the Holy Ghost fulfils these obligations, the great source of the graces which are given to us in the sacraments ; of the devout thoughts and the pious emotions which forward us to good and turn us away from evil ; of the joy which we feel when we do well ; of the remorse which reproaches us for our faults and excites us to repentance ; in a word, is it not the Holy Ghost who produces all these effects or gifts in us ? Is it not he who gives strength to martyrs, chastity to

virgins, fervor to undergo the austerities of penance, and perseverance in the practice of good works to the most perfect Christians? From him proceed these sublime acts of virtue which are called the beatitudes and fruits of the Holy Ghost; and from him also proceed all the sanctity and merit which God crowns in Heaven.

Yes, my dear reader, these are the effects of the promises which the Holy Ghost has made you.

What bounty, and what charity, in the three Persons of the most adorable Trinity, to oblige themselves to these things so profitable to all who receive Baptism. With what promptness ought you not to fulfil your obligations, since God is so faithful to fulfil his. Your fidelity to them is the principal acknowledgment which he requires of you for all his favors. But in order that you may the more fully appreciate your duty, we are about to speak to you of the obligations which you have contracted towards His Divine Majesty in the covenant which you have made with him.

CHAPTER V.

The obligations which every Christian contracts in his Baptism, and particularly that of renouncing Satan and his works.

WHEN you entered into an alliance with God, through the holy and sacred contract of Baptism, you offered, gave, and consecrated yourself to his Divine Majesty, and bound yourself to him in the following promises:—First—That you should never hold any communication with Satan. Second—That you would abstain from all sin. Third—That you would never devote your affections to earthly things. These promises are expressed by the words in which you renounce Satan and his works and pomps.

You renounced Satan because, through original sin, you were his child and slave, and you could not enter into favor with God without having renounced his enemy. The Priest asks you,—“Do you renounce Satan?” and you answer,—“I do renounce him.” By

these words, you broke off your alliance with the devil, obtained grace, and became one of the children of God. This obliges you to live in entire separation from the devil, and never again to unite yourself with those who hold communication with him; such as sorcerers, magicians, or those who cure diseases, extinguish fires, and do other similar acts by his operation. It also requires you to watch without ceasing, lest you should fall into the temptation of this enemy, who, as St. Peter teaches us, goes about continually to seduce us into infidelity towards God, and to subject us anew to his own tyranny.

In order to excite yourself to this vigilance, often recall to mind these words of Jesus Christ:—"And when an unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeketh rest, and findeth none. Then he saith; I will return into my home from whence I came out. And coming, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then he goeth, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that

man is made worse than the first.”* Fear, then, this evil, as the greatest which can befall you.

But in order to enter again into alliance with the devil, it is only necessary that you should imitate his disobedience by committing any mortal sin, since you have renounced all his works, which are sin. It is in consequence of this renunciation that the well-beloved Disciple of Jesus Christ says, that “Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not,” and that “He that committeth sin is of the devil.”† You ought, therefore, as far as possible with the assistance of grace, to live in righteousness and justice. And if, by any misfortune, you should fall, endeavor to arise immediately by repentance; for even the least sin neglected, prepares you to enter into a new revolt, through mortal sin, by which you lose the inestimable character of child of God, with all the blessings which belong to it. In effect, the same Apostle teaches us, that—“In this the children of God are manifest, and the

* Math., 12th chap., 43d, 44th, 45th verses.

† 1st John., 3d chap., 6th and 7th verses.

children of the devil. Whosoever is not just, is not of God."*

FIRST PROMISE.—*To renounce the pomps of Satan.*

The great cause through which the Christian falls into sin, is his attachment to the things of this world. In order to ensnare us, the devil gives sin a captivating appearance, that he might the more easily cause us to commit it. It was thus he seduced our first parents; by promising them the knowledge of good and evil. He even dared to tempt our Lord himself in the same manner; offering him all the possessions of the earth if he would only commit one sin. We find, that in all his attempts to draw us into sin, he invariably holds out a hope of some temporal advantage. Thousands of Christians daily yield to this temptation, and lose the eternal happiness of the other life to enjoy the false pleasures of this world.

In order to fortify you against the dangers

* 1st John., chap. 3d, 10th verse.

to which you are exposed, of being seduced by this deceptive allurements, you are obliged to renounce the pomps of Satan. You are not obliged by this renunciation really to deprive yourself of the goods which you legitimately possess, or not to labor to acquire them; but you are taught not to attach yourself to them to the prejudice of your duty to God. According to this engagement, you must be prepared to forfeit all the enjoyments of this life, rather than commit one mortal sin to possess them.

You are therefore obliged to regard everything in this world, as being sent to you by divine Providence, to serve you in your passage through life; and you should no more cling to them than the traveller does to the inn in which he is entertained on his journey. You must use them only as the good servant uses those which belong to his master.

In a word, do not all things in this world belong to God, and are not we all his servants? From his hands we receive all good things, and he permits us to use them for our own benefit; but we must not attach ourselves

to them as to himself. Great ones of the world, know that your dignity belongs to the house of God, and that your riches come from Him. Do you imagine that you are not poor servants, or that by enriching you God has done more than confided to you his goods? Are you aware that in your Baptism, you promised, on pain of eternal separation from God, not to bestow your affections on anything which you possess in this world, in order that you might give yourself entirely to God, who wishes to be himself your glory, your riches, and your eternal good? Learn, then, from this day, that nothing is more expressly enforced in the Sacred Scriptures than the necessity of a perfect detachment from all the things of the world. Is it not this which Jesus Christ teaches us when he says, that "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

And again he tells you,—“If any man

* Math., 6th chap., 24th verse.

come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”*

This detachment which Jesus Christ demands is so general, that there can be no exception, since he desires that the Christian should not devote himself to father, or mother, brother or sister, or even to his own life; and he declares, in the most explicit manner, that he who preserves an attachment for any of these things, cannot be his disciple. Therefore the Apostle St. James says:—“Know ye not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God.”† St. John the Evangelist, writing on the same subject to the newly converted Christians, addresses them in these words, so full of sweetness:—“Little children, love not the world, nor those things which are in the world. If any one love the world, the charity

* Luke, 14th chap., 26th verse.

† James, 4th chap., 4th verse.

of the Father is not in him."* Wherefore St. Augustine concludes, that the good on earth is constituted of those who love God to the contempt of themselves, and that the sinners love themselves and the world to the contempt of God. *Ecce runt duas civitates amores duo, terrenum scilicet amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei; celestem vero amor Dei usque a contemptum sui.*

St. John shows us, in the following text, the things which we ought not to love, when he says, that—"All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."† The concupiscence of the flesh comprises all the sensual pleasures; those of the taste, of the touch, and of carnal delights. Concupiscence of the eyes, regards the pleasures of life; cruel exhibitions, idle curiosities, the love of useless sciences, sumptuous living, levity in dress, costly dwellings, plays, vain amusements, flattery, and the esteem of

* 1st John., 2d chap., 15th verse.

† 1st John., 2d chap., 16th verse.

men; in a word, all those things which only delight the eye, please the imagination, and have for their object the pleasure and love of the world. Finally, the pride of life concupiscence, ambition, the love of show, of dignity, distinction, and all these vanities which usually accompany riches and high places; luxury, independence, feasting, contempt of others, and the gratification of following our own will.

Such, dear reader, are the things which you have renounced, and for which you can form no attachment without breaking the alliance which you have entered into with God. But in order to live in this perfect separation from all things, it is necessary that we should subdue our own passions. These propensities will follow us during life; they are the cause of the fierce combat which St. Paul describes in these terms:—"I find then a law, that when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me. For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating

me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Therefore I myself, with the mind, serve the law of God: but, with the flesh, the law of sin.”* By the flesh all our inclinations are carried away with the love of the creature and of sin; while the grace which had been given in Baptism, urges us to the love of God and the practice of every good work. How shall we overcome these evil inclinations towards the creature? St. Paul teaches us, that it is only in crucifying our flesh with its concupiscence; that is, subduing the desires of lust by fasting and other austerities, to render it obedient to grace. The punishment may be great, but the recompense is still greater, for, after having reigned in this world over the flesh, we shall infallibly reign with Jesus Christ in Heaven for all eternity.

SECOND PROMISE.—*To unite ourselves to God by Faith.*

The second obligation which you have contracted in your Baptism, is to unite yourself

* Rom., 7th chap., 21st, 22d, 23d, and 25th verses.

to God by faith, by hope, and by charity. This you have promised most solemnly in your answer to the Priest, when he asked you —“*Do you believe in God, the Father, in Jesus Christ his only Son, and in the Holy Ghost?*” as if you said—“I believe in one God and three divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;” and that you wished to place your hope, your love, and your whole heart in him. You are, therefore, required to live in the faith of one only God and three divine Persons, and of all the other truths which God has revealed. You have no exception to make, since all which proceeds from the Sovereign Truth is equally certain and indubitable. But, that you may have a true faith in those things which God has revealed, it is necessary that you should believe in the Catholic Church, in which alone you can learn with certainty what God has revealed. For this reason, after you have been asked if you believe in God, you are also asked if you believe in the Catholic Church.

Certainly those who do not believe in the

Catholic Church cannot have divine faith in the mysteries which they believe, but only natural and human faith; a faith of their own fancy, founded on the light of their own judgment, subject to error, and not on the promises of Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church alone possesses these promises, and on her testimony alone rests the foundation of Christian faith. As she possesses the divine promises for all days, even to the end of ages, there can be no reason to doubt whatever she proposes to our belief.

Thank God for having given you the precious gift of faith, and having made you a child of the holy Catholic Church, which is the faithful repository of the truths of salvation, and which all Christians are obliged to acknowledge as the true Church. In saying, "I believe in the holy Catholic Church," you united yourself inseparably to this holy mother; you believe, without hesitation, all that she proposes, as proposed to you by Jesus Christ himself, who is ever with her in her instructions. Reject, then, with horror, everything at variance with her teachings, and

regard it as an error calculated to endanger your faith.

However ignorant you may be, you have the true faith if you believe, without exception, all the holy Catholic Church believes and teaches; on the other hand, however learned you may be, you lose the gift and the virtue of faith if you reject any doctrine which she teaches; for her faith is your rule. "As there is but one faith," says St. Paul, "to wish to divide it, is to destroy it." Heretics not only differ from the Church in faith, but they also differ amongst themselves, a proof that they have not the true faith, which is one. The holy Catholic Church never has suffered, and never will suffer, a difference of faith in regard to any article. Her faith is the same in all times, in all places, and in all her true children. Thus her faith is one and the only true faith. You should be most desirous to preserve the faith in all its purity, since without it, it is impossible to do anything which merits Heaven. "Without faith it is impossible to please

God.”* Those who do not possess it may practise all the moral virtues, justice, sobriety, chastity, alms-deeds, prayers, mortification; and not only is this the case with heretics, but it is a truth which should be borne in mind, that these good actions, unless they have faith for their principle, will never merit Heaven for them. The law of Moses, all holy as it was, could save only those who observed it through faith.

When, therefore, you observe that those, who believe not in the Church, practise some good works, offer many prayers, and lead an austere life, do not believe that they are on this account in the way of salvation, unless they have true faith; you commit an enormous sin if you believe that they can be saved outside of the Church; that they can have faith without believing in her, or that they can be saved without faith. On the contrary, when you see the faithful lead disorderly lives; when you perceive that those who ought to give good example to others,

* Hebrews, 11th chap., 6th verse.

are themselves the first to enter into sin, you must not, on this account, doubt the faith of the Church, for it is neither the Church, nor her doctrines, which are the causes of their disorders. The doctrines of the Church are no less pure with regard to morals than with regard to faith; she condemns alike all disorders and all errors. When, therefore, you behold vice reign where virtue alone should be practised, in place of relaxing your faith you should reanimate it, and endeavor by your example to support those who are weak, against the scandal into which they are in danger of falling.

THIRD PROMISE.—*The Christian unites himself to God by hope.*

You are thus obliged to unite yourself to God by hope, that is to say; to regard God as your sovereign good, and to seek to possess him in preference to all other things. He is really your sovereign good; since he possesses, in himself alone, all that is good, all that is beautiful, all that is grand and desir-

able in all creatures, and he possesses these characters in a degree infinitely more perfect than they do. Thus, in possessing him, you become more rich, more noble, more powerful, more wise, more happy, than you could be in possessing all the treasures of the earth, all the dignities of the kings and princes of this world; all the power, the wisdom, and the happiness that have ever been obtained amongst men. Wherefore, hope requires you to prefer the enjoyment of God to all the goods of the world, and that you should be disposed to lose all that you possess, even your life itself if necessary, in order to preserve the grace which he has given you. Consequently, he demands that you hate sin more than all the ills of life, and even more than the most cruel death, since it causes you to lose himself.

Hope is therefore not a feeble desire for eternal life, as some may imagine, but it is a desire, lively and animated, which detaches us from all other things by uniting us entirely to this great object, which inspires us with the will and desire to sell all and give all, in order

to obtain this precious treasure. Examine, then, my dear brother, if these are your dispositions ; for if they are not, your hope is not worthy of God, and it will not save you.

But remark, that divine hope which urges you to seek the possession of God and to desire it above all other things, requires you always to act according to these two principal rules. The first is to found your expectations on the goodness of God and the merits of Jesus Christ, and not on yourself, or any thing which you may possess. The reason of this is, that it is of faith that eternal life is not due to the dignity of our nature ; that having lost by sin the right to enjoy it, we can only recover it through the merits of Jesus Christ ; and in fine, that, without the assistance of grace we can do nothing to bring us to the possession of God. To pretend to merit it by nature alone, is the highest excess of presumption and pride.

The second rule is, to take the means which God, in his mercy, has prescribed for us to obtain salvation ; namely, Baptism for those who have not already received it ; worthy penance

for those who have sinned after Baptism ; flight from sin, detachment from creatures, and the practice of good works ; for, to expect that we can gain salvation without taking these means, or, that we can save our souls by loving the world, living in bad habits, making confession without amendment, violating all the commandments of God and of the church, and neglecting the duties of our particular state of life, is to tempt God most criminally, to contradict his divine Word, to mock his menaces, to abuse the bounty and merit of our divine Saviour ; in a word, it is to arrive at certain damnation.

FOURTH PROMISE.—*To unite yourself to God in love.*

You have also promised to unite yourself to God by charity ; that is to say, to consider God as the sovereign good, and the last end, for which you were created ; to devote and consecrate yourself to his service, and to refer to his glory all your thoughts, your desires, your words and your actions, and to

detest and avoid, more than all the evils of the world, those things which displease him; for in this love properly consists the great precept of charity: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind."*

These are the words of Jesus Christ himself, to which we may add, that all the faculties of your body, all your strength, all your power, all your industry, all your possessions, in a word, all which is in you, should enter into this love. For, as God has given you the right to inherit his glory, it is indispensably necessary that you should devote yourself entirely to his love; inasmuch as he does not sanction the utterance of a single word, unless it tends to a good end, as Jesus Christ assures us, that we must render an account of every idle word.

Hope regards God only as good in reference to us, and the end which it proposes is our own happiness. If hope aspires to the possession

* Luke, 10th chap., 27th verse.

of God, it is only to render us happy. But charity regards God not only as good in reference to us, but as infinitely good in himself, and as the end of all things; wherefore, the end of charity is God himself, his service, and his glory.

As the greatest glory which we can render to God is obedience to his commandments, to offer him the sacrifice of ourselves, and to refer all our actions to his glory; charity obliges us to observe strictly all the commandments of God, to avoid the least sin, to devote and to consecrate ourselves entirely to the service of his divine Majesty, and to be careful to have no other intention than to please him in all our actions; in fine, to suffer, with submission and resignation to his holy will, poverty, contempt, injustice, and all the other crosses which we may meet with in this life.

When, through charity, we offer to God our actions, all that we do must be meritorious. It is not, therefore, merely by our prayers, our fastings, and our alms, that we merit eternal glory. Works of the most

humble kind, even to drink and to eat, inasmuch as we do it for the subsistence of the body, is meritorious, when we offer it to God through a motive of charity. Happy the soul which comprehends well this great virtue, and which studies to practise it! It accumulates daily new treasures of merit. You who earn your bread by the sweat of your brow, laborers, soldiers, artisans, who spend your lives in labor and toil, in humble dwellings, poorly clad and poorly fed, what an amount of reward will be yours, if you are careful to avoid sin, and to offer to God your labors and your sufferings. Divine charity accepts all your privations, as so many good works; you surpass in merit those who live in cloisters, for your life is more austere and more laborious. All your labor tends to acquire for you an increase of grace and merit. Thus it was that the holy Patriarchs, who were employed in cultivating the earth, and pasturing their flocks, acquired before God such great recompense. In the same manner St. Joseph, in his labors as a carpenter, and the blessed Virgin, in her do-

mestic industry, constantly increased in merit and in grace. You can do the same, since you have only to continue in the grace of God, and offer to him your actions and your sufferings. But, alas! you know not this pious duty, since you do not practise it; and, after having suffered so much in this life, you have still to suffer more in the next. Is it not a deplorable truth, that many who fill the highest offices, and occupations the most holy, lose the merit of all their actions in failing to perform them with that purity of heart and intention which is necessary.

Love of the world obliges them to live in a state of sin, or prevents them from offering their actions to God. May you do better, my dear reader, and practise the salutary advice which St. Paul gives you: "Above all things have charity."* Consider this, by carefully avoiding all mortal sin: "Whether you eat, or drink, or whatsoever else ye do, do all things for the glory of God."† "All whatsoever you do, in word or in work, do all

* Col., 3d chap., 14th verse.

† 1st Cor., 10th chap., 31st verse.

in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Servants, whatsoever you do, do it from the heart, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance. There is no respect of persons with God.”*

Admirable consolation for those who toil; the obligations which they are under to labor for their masters, diminish nothing of the merits of their actions, if they perform them for the service of God.

FIFTH PROMISE.—*The Christian unites himself to Jesus Christ, as to his Master and to his Head.*

The third obligation which you have contracted in Baptism is to unite yourself to Jesus Christ as to your Master and your Head: by this union you gain for yourself the glorious name of Christian, which signifies disciple, and member of Jesus Christ.

This obligation involves many important duties.

* Col., 3d chap., 17th verse.

For in taking Jesus Christ for your Master, you are bound to believe in his doctrines, to embrace his maxims, to obey his laws, to imitate his virtues ; and these are the great duties of a good disciple toward his Master. In taking the divine Saviour for your head, you have pledged yourself to act by His Spirit alone, and you have engaged to live his own life. The members should be animated by the spirit of him who is their head, and should live in accordance with his life. All these things are expressly pointed out in the sacred Scriptures ; “ You are not in the flesh,” says St. Paul to the Christians of Rome, “ but in the spirit.” “ If so be that the spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”* We are not therefore of Jesus Christ, whilst this is not our spirit, but it is the spirit of the world, or our own spirit which animates us.

When this holy Apostle calls Jesus Christ your life, he only teaches you that if you do not live according to Jesus Christ, your soul

* Rom., 8th chap., 9th verse.

is dead. When he gives us this rule : " Be ye of the same sentiments and the same dispositions of heart with Jesus Christ," does he not teach that the doctrines of Jesus Christ ought to be ours, that we ought to judge of things as he judges ; esteem that which he esteems, condemn that which he condemns, love that which he loves, hate that which he hates, desire that which he desires, in a word, to conform all our inclinations to his ? St. John clearly expresses the obligations which Christians are under to imitate the life of their divine Master, in addressing to them these words : " He that saith he abideth in Him," that he is one of his members, one of his faithful disciples, " ought himself also to walk, even as he walked."* Thus, St. Gregory of Nyssa justly remarks : " *That to be a Christian is to be united to Jesus Christ, and to make profession of leading the same life which he led on earth.*"

In order to enable us to fulfil so holy an obligation, Baptism, while it confers on us sanc-

* 1st John, 2d chap., 6th verse.

tifying grace which effaces sin, likewise disposes us to all the moral and theological virtues, together with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. These holy dispositions direct our spirit to follow the doctrines and maxims of Jesus Christ; to think, and to judge of all things as this divine Master judges and thinks of them himself.

These dispositions, springing up in our hearts, are the germs of the same dispositions which were in Jesus Christ himself, and they direct our inclinations to the practice of every virtue. In a word, if we faithfully correspond with the impressions of these virtues, and with the gifts which the Holy Ghost infuses into our souls at the moment of Baptism, we shall experience, in ourselves, only the same inclinations which were in Jesus Christ on earth; and we shall imitate only his example.

But, alas! the pernicious influence of a worldly system of education, and the want of good example in those who have the charge of youth; the occasions of sin of which the world is full; the temptations of the devil; in fine, the corrupt inclinations of our evil

nature, the unhappy effects of original sin, which we have not been careful enough to mortify, prevent the good seed, which the Holy Ghost has instilled into our souls, from fructifying.

Wherefore it is, that the church is compared to a field in which the tares almost choke the good seed. In place of the fruits of grace and virtue, we scarcely perceive any other than the pernicious fruits of every vice. In place of the maxims of the gospel, the maxims of the love of God, charity towards our neighbors, hatred of sin, contempt of the world, humility, patience, we find only the corrupt maxims of the age ; vanity, self-interest, pleasure, impiety, love of self and of the things of the world. We scarcely behold a trace of the life of Christ in the conduct of Christians. In place of imitating this divine model, which is necessary for us in order to be saved, each one conducts himself in imitation of those who are most lax, and even most vicious. May I not then hope, my dear reader, that these instructions will prove beneficial to you, who by faith have been convinced of the indispen-

sable obligation which you have contracted to pursue a holy life, according to Jesus Christ your divine model, and to fulfil the other promises of your Baptism in order that you may spend the remainder of your life in accordance with these pressing duties, by which you shall be judged at the hour of your death.

If, up to this time, the allurements of the devil, the blindness of mind, the tyranny of your passions, the evil example of others, the enchantment of creatures, have hurried you on to a violation of your holy promises, which St. Augustine calls the greatest of all vows; promises from which neither the sovereign Pontiff, nor any other power can dispense you; if, up to this time, you have lived without performing them, neglect not any longer the opportunity which is given you to change your life. The most blessed Trinity, in the name of which you were baptized; Jesus Christ, who has given his blood to efface your crimes; and the Holy Church, your mother, demand of you this happy change, and all heaven will rejoice at it. Say, therefore, from the depth of your heart, Satan, I renounce you for ever,

with all your works and pomps. I quitted my God, and my celestial Father to follow your pernicious laws. I now wish to return to my merciful Father, and to be faithful to him during the remainder of my life. I wish only to live for him. I regret my infidelities. I desire to follow the doctrines and the examples of Jesus Christ, in order to obtain pardon for my sins, and to avoid the damnation which I have merited.

CHAPTER VI.

Confirmation of what has been said heretofore by the explanation of the Ceremonies of Baptism.

THE Holy Catholic Church, always directed by Jesus Christ her head, and by the Holy Ghost her spouse, suffers no doubt to exist in the mind of her children as to the ceremonies which she practises in the administration of the sacraments, being most holy and full of salutary instructions. This is remarkable in

the ceremonies which she prescribes to be used in the administration of Baptism.

In them we find two principles containing most salutary instructions, on which perhaps you have never sincerely meditated. I beseech you, therefore, to consider with attention, the explanation which I am about to give you; it will serve to confirm and establish all that has been said in the preceding chapters.

Firstly, When you had been presented to the church to receive Baptism, you were treated as a person in the possession of the devil, for the priest pronounced over you the exorcism of the church, commanding the wicked spirit to depart from you, and to give place to the Holy Ghost.

This ceremony teaches you that by original sin you were really in possession of the devil, and that he abided in you, but that, through Baptism, he has been cast out of you; that your soul has been purified from the horrible stain which disfigured it, and that the Holy Ghost, having sanctified and ornamented it with his grace, comes to take up his abode in it.

Secondly, The Priest marked you with the sign of the cross, on the forehead and on the breast, which are the two principal parts of the body where the soul exercises its most noble faculties. The sign of the cross teaches you principally three things:

Firstly, That Baptism imprints in your soul a spiritual character, which no sin can efface. This character is a proof that from this time you do not belong to yourself, but that you are the property of Jesus Christ, who has purchased you by the infinite price of his blood and of his death. You are not of yourself, but you are of Christ; wherefore, St. Paul concludes, "that the Christian should no longer live for himself, but for Him who died and rose again for him;" that is to say, that the Christian should live a life of grace, and that he should consecrate to his Redeemer his spirit, his heart, and all his actions.

In the second place, That you should not be ashamed of Jesus Christ, nor of his cross, and that you should profess his doctrine and love his example; the poverty, the humilia-

tion, the suffering which are signified by the cross.

Thirdly, That by Baptism, which receives all its virtues from the cross, your body and your soul are entirely consecrated to the blessed Trinity. This consecration is more holy than that of the temples and sacred vessels, for theirs is purely exterior; but that of your body and your soul is interior, for it is sanctified by the grace which the Holy Ghost confers upon you. By this consecration, not only your soul but your body, and all your members, become the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is this the Apostle St. Paul teaches, when he says, "that all Christians ought to glorify and carry God in their bodies;" that is to say, they should treat their bodies with sovereign respect, on account of Him who deigns to dwell in them. We admire the respect with which the Priests carried the Arch of the Alliance; you carry something more sacred, since you bear with you God himself. In what purity and sanctity ought you not, therefore, preserve your body and soul. When you sully your mem-

bers by sin, you do greater injury to God than those who profane the Church and other sacred things.

Thirdly, The Priest placed on your tongue some grains of blessed salt, salt being the emblem of wisdom. This ceremony should recall to your mind, Firstly, that our Lord Jesus Christ, who is eternal wisdom, gives himself to you in Baptism, to be your life, your strength, your light, and that he unites and incorporates you with him, in order that you may conduct yourself only according to his Spirit, and live only according to his life.

Secondly, That you should have no desire or affection for the things of the earth; that you should only desire and seek after those of Heaven, since in this alone consists true wisdom.

Thirdly, That you should no more conduct yourself according to the senses, as beasts, nor according to human reason, as the Pagan philosophers, nor, much less, according to the maxims of worldly wisdom and the prudence of the flesh, which is only folly, and which brings death to the soul, but according to the

maxims of the gospel, which are the emanations of uncreated Wisdom, coming down to us from the bosom of the Father of light, and diffusing itself over the world.

Fourthly, The Priest applies saliva to the ears, and says, "Be ye opened." This saliva applied to the ears, signifies to you the faith which God infuses into your hearts whilst you listen to the teachings of his ministry. "Faith," says St. Paul, "comes by hearing;" but it is not sufficient merely to hear it; it is necessary to believe it, in order to receive from God the gift which enlightens the spirit and opens the heart. Baptism confers on you this precious gift, that your spirit, being enlightened by it, may firmly believe all that the holy Catholic Church proposes to your belief, and that you should shut your ears, not only to the pernicious maxims of Satan, but also against the language of those who speak contrary to the doctrine of the Church. For you must not permit yourself to be seduced by the false promises of heretics, who pretend to teach the truth; but recall to your minds this article of divine Faith, which you

solemnly professed in Baptism: "I believe in the holy Catholic Church." This word alone will confound the enemies of religion, will save you from all error, and preserve you in the faith which God has given you. Saliva is also applied to the nose, to signify that you ought only to follow the good odor of the virtues of Jesus Christ, and to avoid the evil odor of the vices which reign in this corrupt world.

Fifthly, The Priest introduced you into the Church, by saying, "Enter into the house of God, that you may have eternal life." This ceremony teaches you that Baptism enables you to enter into the society of Jesus Christ, and of all the faithful who compose the house or family of God. By this entry, you begin to partake of all the good works of the faithful, and you acquire a right to the sacraments, to the prayers, and to all the other good works which are done in the Church. Moreover, in entering into the Church, you have become her child, and have been made a child of God, the heir of God, and co-heir of Jesus Christ; you entered into society and communion with the angels and all the

blessed who are in Heaven. By this ceremony you are likewise taught that, in order to be united to Jesus Christ, and to have eternal life, it is necessary to be a member of the Church, and to persevere therein to the end, believing all she teaches, obeying all she commands.

Sixthly, Having arrived at the Baptismal font, you were asked if you renounced Satan and his works and pomps ; to which you answered : “ I do renounce them.” You were afterwards asked if you believed in the Father Almighty, in Jesus Christ, his only Son, and in the Holy Ghost ; to which you answered : “ I do believe.”

This ceremony teaches you that in order to be a Christian, two things are necessary. The first is, you must break off, for ever, all alliance with the devil, and avoid his works which are sin ; and despise the pomps and vanities of the world by which the devil wishes to draw you into crimes. Secondly, To unite yourself inseparably to God, and to render him all the duties which belong to his divine Majesty, by the practice of faith, of hope, of charity, of religion, by obedience to his divine

laws, and perfect submission to the orders of his providence.

Seventhly, You were anointed with holy oil on the breast, and between the shoulders, to show that Baptism gave you strength to vanquish the enemies of your salvation, in the combats which you have to encounter through life, and whom if you conquer, you shall have your reward before the judgment seat of God.

Eighthly, You were Baptized with water in these words : “ I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The water represents sanctifying grace which purifies your soul from the horrible stain of sin. Formerly, Baptism was given by immersion. This was for the better representing of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the grace which had been given to you in Baptism ; in order that you might die to sin and live to grace, by the practice of good works, crucify the old man, that is to say, the wicked inclinations which are the consequences of the sin of our first parents, and to live according to the new man, who is Jesus Christ.

The apostle St. Paul instructs us in this mystery when he says : “ For we are buried together with him by Baptism unto death : that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in likeness of his death, in like manner we shall be of his resurrection : knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and that we may serve sin no longer. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin ; but present yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead ; and your members as instruments of justice unto God.”* The small quantity of water which had been poured on you, was not sufficient for you to understand all these important instructions. The names of the three Persons of the most holy Trinity were mentioned to show you, that, you should profess your faith in the Three, and render them the duties you owe

* Rom., 6th chap., 4th, 5th, 6th, 12th, and 13th verses.

them on account of their infinite dignity, for the incomparable favors which they conferred on you in your Baptism. For as it has been already said, the Father took you for his child and heir to his own glory ; the Son took you for one of the members of his own mystic body, even for his brother and co-heir of all the goods which he has received from his Father ; the Holy Ghost sanctified you in order that you might become his temple and the temple of the two other divine Persons, who came to you and took up their abode in you. Wherefore the Holy Ghost stamped you with the seal of the blessed Trinity, as a thing which belonged to himself. This indelible character which raised you above all the greatness of the world, will be to you the cause of eternal confusion, if you preserve not the fidelity which you promised to God, and if you dishonor the dignity and sanctity of your state by a criminal life.

Ninthly, In your Baptism, the Priest anointed your head with holy oil, to show that the Son of God made you partakers of his Royalty and his Priesthood ; as St. John

the Evangelist writes in the first chapter of the Apocalypse, "He hath made us a Kingdom and Priests to God and his Father."* As members of Jesus Christ, we have part in his royalty, and in the empire which he exercises over death, sin, and the devil; since by the assistance of grace we use this power against the enemies of our salvation. You are thus a Priest, inasmuch as you offer with him the unbloody sacrifice of the altar, where he is at the same time Priest and Victim; and you offer yourself in sacrifice to the eternal Father; you offer to him all your actions and sufferings; in fine, you offer him prayers, praises, and the sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart.

A celebrated author says, that "this unction gives us the name of Christians, because it shows that we are partakers of the unction of Jesus Christ, of this interior and spiritual unction, which sanctifies our souls and consecrates them to God." For the grace given us in Baptism is the same which was given to

* Apoc., 1st chap., 6th verse.

him at the moment of his conception ; wherefore St. Augustine says, that by Baptism “we become of Christ.”

Tenthly, After this unction, the Priest clothes you with a white robe. This robe represents Jesus Christ ; for St. Paul says, “As many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ ;”^{*} that is to say, you have cast off the old man in the waters of Baptism, and you have been clothed anew. You were plunged in ignorance, and in every kind of iniquity ; thus the old man acted in you ; but by Baptism you have been clothed with Jesus Christ, replenished with his Spirit, enlightened by his wisdom, filled with his grace and his virtues, in order that you might be an imitation of the life of our divine Redeemer.

The white robe denotes, also, firstly, that by Baptism your soul has been cleansed and purified from the sin which rendered it foul and horrible in the sight of God.

Secondly, That you ought henceforth lead a life of purity and innocence.

^{*} Gal., 3d chap., 27th verse.

Thirdly, That you ought to triumph over the devil, because, they are veiled in white who are rewarded with the honors of victory.

Fourthly, That you ought to liberate yourself from the servitude of sin, and of your passions, because, in former times, those white garments were bestowed on the slaves who received their liberty.

Eleventhly, After the white robe had been removed, a lighted taper was placed in your hand. This taper, says St. Charles, “signifies, by its brightness, the faith which enlightens your soul; by its heat, the charity which inflames your heart with the love of God and of your neighbor, and, by its erectness, the hope, which, in detaching you from the things of this world, animates you to desire only those which are of Heaven.

It likewise signifies the exemplary life which you ought to lead, according to the words of Jesus Christ: “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.”* “For you were heretofore

* Matthew, 5th chap., 16th verse.

darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk ye as children of the light. Proving what is acceptable to God: and having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”*

Twelfthly, The ringing of the bell reminds you, in the first place, of the joy of the Church militant at the birth of one of her children.

In the second place, of the joy of the Church triumphant at the deliverance of a soul from the slavery of the devil; since Jesus Christ assures us that, “There shall be joy in Heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance.”† In the third place, your joy in finding yourself of the number of the children of God, and in the way of salvation. In the fourth place, the triumph of Jesus Christ over the devil, in having delivered you from the power of the enemy.

* Eph. 5th chap., 8th, 10th and 11th verses.

† Luke, 15th chap., 7th verse.

CHAPTER VII.

That it is sweeter and more agreeable to live according to the promises of Baptism than to lead a life opposed to them.

MANY Christians are prevented from fulfilling the promises of Baptism, by the fear that to observe them, they must lead a life of sadness, of hardships, and of misery; but it is easy to see that those who violate them lead a life much more unhappy and miserable than those who preserve them faithfully. In speaking of each one of these promises in particular, it is my intention to explain to you the difference which must exist between those who fulfil and those who do not fulfil them. How happy and contented are the former, while the latter are eternally wretched and miserable.

FIRST PROMISE.

Inasmuch as you are faithful in renouncing sin, you live under the empire of God, who

is the greatest of all sovereigns, the most charitable of fathers, the kindest of masters, and the most faithful of friends. He regards you as his child; he makes you partakers of his good; he fills your spirit with light, and your heart with joy; he consoles your affection, he supports you in your weakness; he attends to your wants; if he permits you to fall into evil, it is to afford an occasion of conferring on you greater benefit.

“His yoke is sweet, and his burthen light.” He may appear to command things most difficult; great austerities, painful labors; but in reality, such is not the case; he requires of you only what reason should teach you to practise. He only demands of you to love him, and to do for his glory what belongs to your state of life. He permits you to enjoy the good which you have legitimately acquired, and to enjoy the advantages of your condition of life, providing only that you love him always more than all you possess.

If you should have to encounter crosses, they form no part of the services which you

are to render to God, but they are the result of your own imperfections, or of those of other men with whom you associate. So far from fidelity to God augmenting them, it sweetens them, by the consolation which his love imparts to your sufferings. They who violate their renouncements of Satan, will be far from enjoying equal happiness with those who remain faithful to them. They fall under the dominion of Satan, who is the most cruel of all tyrants, the hardest of masters, the most implacable of enemies, and the most barbarous of all persecutors. He entertains for them a mortal hatred; he seeks only their destruction and their ruin.

If he promises them any good, it is only to render them miserable; if he permits them to taste of momentary pleasure, it is only to plunge them into eternal grief. He hurries them from one disorder into another, with the hope of deriving some gratification from it; but they no sooner taste of the poisoned cup of pleasure than he makes them feel its bitterness. Impieties, injustices, wrath, impurities, avarice, ambition, are the things to

which Satan solicits, without ceasing, those who return to him; and, in order to obtain their desires, what pains, what uneasiness must they not undergo! Their heart is continually agitated with fears, with suspicions, with jealousies, and despair; they feel neither peace nor repose, and after he has rendered them miserable in this life, he renders them more unhappy for eternity. What a sad state! Must he not necessarily be at enmity with himself, to prefer it to the state of the true servant of God; and to believe that he leads a life more sweet, more agreeable, in the service of the devil, than in the service of God.

Open your eyes, my dear reader, and, if you have been, up to this time, in this error, abandon it quickly, and understand, that the only happiness of life is in the service of God.

SECOND PROMISE.

In observing the second promise, by which you have renounced the works of Satan, which are sin, you preserve the inestimable treasure of grace. You feel within you, the peace,

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the joy of a good conscience, which gives you confidence in your prayers, consoles you in your afflictions, supports you in your trials, assists you in dangers, and renders you content in the performance of all your duties. You acquire fresh blessings every moment, in order to enable you to offer to God all that you do ; sickness, loss of goods, afflictions, all become meritorious for you. Through the grace which renders you worthy of Heaven, these become profitable for your eternal salvation.

But, in violating, through mortal sin, this second promise, you lose God, and his grace, and at the same time, you lose the peace and the tranquillity of your soul. You immediately feel the trouble and the remorse of a guilty conscience, which causes you, day and night, unsupportable torment.

It could not but compel you to think, that you had been in enmity with God, and, that if you died suddenly, you would find yourself at once plunged into eternal misery. You feared night and day ; you trembled at the least danger, without knowing to whom you

might have recourse ; you had no solid consolation in your afflictions ; for those which come from men serve those little, who are not consoled by God. If you perform any good works, they merit you no recompense in Heaven ; for those whom mortal sin deprives of sanctifying grace, can merit nothing for Heaven, so long as they remain in that state. Their labors and their sufferings, which might satisfy for the pain due to their past sins, and acquire for them, at the same time, new degrees of grace and merit, cannot produce these happy effects, because they lose their rewards through sin. All the fruit which they can obtain through prayers, alms-deeds, and other good works which they perform, may obtain for them the grace of conversion, and bring them back into the path which leads to Heaven. This fruit is truly great, and ought to induce all sinners to perform every good work in their power ; yet it is much less than that which the good obtain for their good actions ; who, while they perform them in satisfaction for the punishments due to their sins, merit an eternal recompense in Heaven,

and obtain for themselves new graces ; which proves to you, that it is infinitely better to observe the second promise, than to enjoy the pleasure of violating it ; a pleasure fleeting, and followed by misery, which, after having rendered the soul unhappy in the present life, will only augment its miseries in eternity.

THIRD PROMISE.

If you observe the third promise, which you made to renounce the pomps of Satan, as has already been explained ; not to attach yourselves to the things of this world, you will live in perfect liberty of mind and heart. This detachment will elevate you far above the ills and the joys of life ; neither the desire of fame, nor the love of riches, nor the enchantments of pleasure, can take possession of your heart, or force you into the commission of sin. Fear of the persecutions of the world, and the troubles of life, can never withdraw you from the fulfilment of the least of your duties. Prosperity will not inflate you with pride ; ad-

versity will not prostrate you, because you will be above them all. Your soul can at all times raise itself to God, through meditation, and your heart ascend, with liberty, to the things of Heaven. You will taste them, and they will become the object of your desires. Ambition, interest, or any other passion, will not vitiate the goodness of your actions, by base and earthly intentions; all your actions will be for the glory of God, and by this means they will render you worthy of eternal life.

But if you violate this third promise, by attaching yourself to the vanities of this world, you draw on yourself every kind of misfortune. St. Paul, speaking of those persons who make riches the great object of their life, and who study nothing else but the means of attaining them, says: "They fall into temptations, the snares of the devil, and the divers useless desires which precipitate men into the abyss of perdition and damnation." He adds, "that many, through the desire of riches, have been led away from faith, and

have become overwhelmed with innumerable afflictions."

The language of St. Paul concerning the misfortune of those who desire riches, is likewise applicable to those who search after the pride and the pleasures of the world. Their fall into the temptations, and snares of the devil, is equally certain. They lose faith, and are ever surrounded with miseries and disappointments.

What anxiety of mind, and affliction of body, must they not suffer in their search after the perishable pleasures of this world; though, when death comes upon them, they must leave all behind, and depart without even the most trifling of the vanities which they so much prized during life: whilst those who live detached from the world, enjoy peace and tranquillity. The votaries of the present corrupt ages are overwhelmed with confusion and despair. They enjoy no repose; fears, suspicions, jealousies, and chagrin continually disturb their minds, and render them unhappy. If you reflect on it seriously, you will find that the life of those who abandon

everything for the love and service of God, is incomparably more sweet and more agreeable than that of worldlings, who seek happiness from earthly enjoyments.

FOURTH PROMISE.

It will afford you further proof of the happiness which persons enjoy in this life, from the peace of mind which they experience in the observance of the fourth promise of Baptism—to believe in God. This promise obliges you to believe all the truths which God has revealed, to consider it the greatest happiness of this world to enjoy the grace of God, and the right to ~~external~~ life; in fine, to love God above all things, and to obey his divine precepts.

Nothing can be more desirable than to live according to this promise, and reason itself teaches that the practice of it is productive of the greatest good.

He who believes all the truths which God has revealed, and which the Church proposes

to his belief, walks in the light, and is guided by the truth. He relies on infallible authority; he fears not to err. He who places his happiness and his confidence in God, loves him with his whole heart, and serves him with fidelity; fearing not the rigor of his justice, he hopes for everything from his goodness. Can any one enjoy greater happiness in this life?

Far different is the state of those persons who violate this Promise; for in withdrawing themselves from the Catholic faith to follow their own private judgment, they fall into darkness and error, and believing they know much, know nothing. Those who place their confidence and their happiness in creatures, resemble those persons who leave the fountain, to seek water in broken and leaky cisterns, which can hold no water; or one who depends on a fragile reed, which only breaks and pierces the hand of him who relied upon it. These are the truths which the holy scripture teaches us. Those who break the ties which unite them to God, and quit his service, shall they not forever deplore the evils and the sufferings which they must encounter through

their desertion? Experience, as well as faith, teaches us, that the wicked shall find no peace. but on the contrary, that those who love and serve God, shall enjoy peace in abundance, which shall render their lives a thousand times sweeter and more agreeable, than are the lives of those who follow their own inordinate inclinations.

Particular Paragraph.

How it comes that one finds pleasure in sin, and pain in the practice of virtue.

THE MEANS TO REMEDY THIS EVIL.

Should it be asked whence it comes that persons find so much pleasure in vice, and so much pain in the practice of virtue; I answer, that this evil arises from the corruption which original sin has transmitted to our passions, which reduces us to the state of certain sick persons, who can only relish those things

which are most nauseous and insipid. Each one relishes whatever is conformable to his own interior disposition; thus our interior being corrupted by the poison of original sin, which gives our souls an evil attraction for the things of this world, we find pleasure in sin, inasmuch as it is conformable to our own vitiated appetites. Nebucodonozor, having been interiorly transformed into a beast, could live only with beasts; the man who is interiorly corrupted, can take pleasure only in things of the earth, while his reason teaches him that he ought to direct himself only according to the things of Heaven, which are eternal; which alone can render him happy.

“He that is of the earth, of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh,”* says Jesus Christ; not only does he take pleasure in speaking of the earth, but he also takes pleasure in enjoying the things of the earth, and the vices which it furnishes. Thus it is, that men find pleasure in sin and pain in virtue.

* John, 3d chap., 31st verse.

To remedy this evil, it is necessary to do violence to our natural inclinations, in ceasing forever to commit sin, for which we have a desire, and in practising virtue to which we feel an aversion. Vice is sweet to those who cannot relish virtue, and, on the contrary, virtue has, in the same manner, attractions which make us love it, and which are capable of disgusting us with vice.

But that which chiefly prevents the hatred of vice and the practice of virtue, is, that we have only abandoned vice by halves, and have not given our hearts entirely to the practice of good works. If we renounce every evil habit, we shall feel an aversion for them. This is remarkable in St. Augustine; while he renounced only imperfectly the disorders to which he had been accustomed, he never became disgusted with them; but when he had renounced them with all his heart, he very soon lost the desire for them, and began to feel the sweetness of virtue. Imitate this great Saint in renouncing sin, and you will, in a short time, experience the happy condition in which he found himself after his con-

version ; deplore, as he did, the transgressions of your past life : you will enjoy, during the remainder of your life, an interior peace and happiness which cannot be expressed, and you will merit a crown of glory in eternity !

CHAPTER VIII.

How we should repair the violation of our Baptismal Promises.

FOUR things are necessary for the observance of these promises. First, is true penance ; for, as the holy Council of Trent teaches, penance is no less necessary for those who have sinned after Baptism, than Baptism is necessary for those who have not received it. The holy scripture informs us, that there are two gates by which we are to enter into heaven—baptismal innocence, and penance. When a Christian has shut against himself the gate of innocence, in violating the holy promises of Baptism, it is necessary that

he should strive to enter by that of penance; otherwise there is no salvation for him. On this account, Jesus Christ, speaking of persons who have lost innocence, says to them: "Unless you do penance, you shall all perish."*

But in order that penance may prevent us from perishing—it must be true penance. Confessors may be deceived by the false appearance of conversion, and it is too often the case; but God is never deceived. If, therefore, those who receive absolution are not truly penitent and worthy of pardon, their sins are not forgiven before God. In order to do true penance, it is not sufficient to confess all our sins and to fulfil what is enjoined on us by the priest. There are two other things which are necessary:

First. To renounce sin with all your heart, and for all your life. It follows, therefore, that those who, in confession, still entertain the will to sin at any time, and on any occasion which may present itself, have not true penance.

* Luke, 13th chap., 5th verse.

Second. To fly the occasions of sin, and to use the means to avoid it. For he who does not do this, will relapse very soon into the same crimes of which he has accused himself; and in neglecting to use the means to avoid relapse, it is evident that he has not a sincere resolution to sin no more.

Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us that we should abandon that which is most dear to us, if we cannot retain it without falling into sin. "If thy right eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, than that thy whole body should be cast into hell; and if thy right hand cause thee to offend, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, than that thy whole body should go into hell."*

This Divine Master says the same of your right foot, in order to teach you, that if, to avoid sin, it is necessary to deprive yourself of things as requisite for you as your eye,

* Matt. 5th chap. 29th and 30th verses.

your hand, and your foot, you should not hesitate to do it. The reason which he gives, is, that it is better to be deprived in this world, of all that we hold most dear, than to lose Paradise, and be condemned, during eternity, to suffer the pains of hell.

Third. Those who have violated the sacred promises of Baptism, should renew, sincerely, their renunciation of Satan; his works and pomps, and the promises of fidelity which they made to God in Baptism. This renewal ought to be made after a general confession, in which you should renounce, with all your heart, these sinful habits, and make a sincere resolution to sin no more. St. Francis of Sales, required this practice of persons whom he directed, as may be seen in the first book of his introduction to a "devout life."

Fourth. To guard against your evil thoughts, that you may not consent to them anew, and to suppress them courageously, in order that you may not be so violently tempted to sin.

Those who have done worthy penance for their sins, will not fail, from time to time, to

feel, when the occasion presents itself, an interior thought to relapse into the same crimes. We have a celebrated example of this in the person of Mary of Egypt, who, after having renounced the disorders in which she had lived for sixteen years, was tormented with continual temptations, to return to her former transgressions. Wherefore it is, that those persons who have done penance for the sins of anger, gluttony, revenge and impurity, often feel in themselves, the desire to commit the same crimes anew. St. Paul shows us, that, if we have those evil thoughts, and that, if we do not mortify them, through the assistance of this grace which God gives us, we will certainly fall into mortal sin.

While we are in the state of grace, they are in some measure weakened and prevented by the strength of the love of God, which is in our heart. We may feel them, but they cannot cause us to sin, if we do not will it ourselves. While we feel them, it is necessary to combat with courage, and to yield not to them. This resistance will fail not to weaken and to render their attacks less powerful.

“Mortify, therefore,” says St. Paul, “your members, which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is the service of idols: for which things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of unbelief; in which you also walked some time, when you lived in them. But now, put you also, all away: anger, indignation, malice, blasphemy, filthy speech out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, stripping yourselves of the old man, with his deeds, and putting on the new,—him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him who created him.”*

Fifth. To labor to acquire merits for Heaven, by the practice of good works; because, in order to be saved, it is not sufficient to avoid evil, but we must do good. Thus, St. Paul, instructing the newly converted Romans, says: “For, as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness, and iniquity unto iniquity, so now, yield your members to serve justice, unto sanctification. Now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God,

* Col., 3d chap., 5th to 10th verses.

you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end everlasting life.”* And, in speaking to the Galatians, he says: “And in doing good, let us not fail; for in due time we shall reap, not failing. Therefore, whilst we have time, let us be good to all men.”†

If men are so anxious to acquire on earth, the goods which they can preserve only for a short time, how ought they labor to acquire, by good works, the goods of Heaven, which they shall enjoy eternally! If God had rendered the acquisition of that difficult, there might be some excuse; but he wishes that all should merit them, in whatsoever condition they may be; poor or rich, the master or the servant, the ignorant or the learned; for he demands only two things, which are in the power of all to perform.

First. That we continue in the state of grace, and avoid sin.

Second. That we may do for his service, and in order to accomplish his will, all that we do. St. Paul teaches us, that those who

* Rom., 6th chap., 19th and 22d verses.

† Gal., 6th chap., 9th and 10th verses.

are faithful to observe these two conditions, will merit Heaven, not only by the prayers, alms, and other good works, but also by sufferings, and labor of the most humble kind; and even by the drink and the food which we use for the subsistence of the body. It is on this account that he says: We cannot sufficiently regret seeing so many Christians passing their lives without acquiring any merit, and depriving themselves, by their own fault, of infinite and eternal good, which is so easily acquired.

Be ye wise and prudent, ye who read this, and amuse yourselves not by running after the things of this world, which pass away like a shadow, but gather for yourselves treasure which will last eternally.*

This is the advice which Jesus Christ gives you, when he says: "Lay not up for yourselves treasure on earth; where the rust and the moth consume, and where thieves dig through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven; where neither the rust

* Matthew, 6th chap., 19th and 20th verses.

nor the moth doth consume, and where theives do not dig through nor steal.”*

CHAPTER IX.

Abridgment of the life of a good Christian ; and, firstly, what he should observe at all times.

THESE three things a Christian should always observe :

First. To avoid sin ; for sin is always opposed to a good life. However small it may be, it is the work of darkness, and it impedes us from entering into Heaven, until it has been expiated. The holy scripture advises us to fly from sin as from a serpent, in order to show us, that as we fly even from the smallest of those wicked creatures, even so should we fly from little sins. When you really love a person, you avoid the least thing which may offend him. A true Christian who loves God as a child ought to love the

* Matt., 6th chap., 9th and 20th verses.

best of parents, abstains also from the least thing which may displease him. He lives in a sincere resolution never to offend him, and when he finds that he has done anything which may displease him, he immediately asks pardon, and tries to repair his fault by penance and by good works done with that intention. This practice is of the greatest consequence, for, when he asks pardon of God, immediately after falling into sin, with the resolution to avoid it, and with the desire of obtaining forgiveness for it, God often remits the sin at the same moment and even before confession.

Second. At all times to offer to God, not only the prayers, the alms, and the other good works which he performs, but also his labor, and all the acts of his life. For whilst he is in grace, he can merit Heaven by everything which he does, providing that they are not evil, and that he does them for the service of God, for his glory, and to fulfil his holy will.

The great Apostle, St. Paul, teaches us this truth while speaking to the poor; he says to them: "servants obey, in all things, your masters, according to the flesh, not serving to

the eyes, as pleasing to men, but in simplicity of heart, fearing God. Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as to the Lord, and not to men: know that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance.”* In another place the same Apostle says: “Knowing that whatsoever good every one shall do, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free.”†

This should induce good and faithful Christians to offer to God their most trifling actions; by this means they acquire treasures of merit according to the example of the blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph, and of many other Saints, who, at the same time they labored to support life, acquired the greatest merits, in offering all their actions to God.

Third. To suffer every day of his life, the crosses which he may meet, with patience and submission to the will of God; for suffering produces in us merits greater and more certain than good works, because it is more difficult to suffer afflictions patiently, than to per-

* Col., 3d chap., 22d verse.

† Eph. 6th chap., 8th verse.

form good actions, and that the love of self oftentimes destroys the merits of our best works; wherefore, as he only finds in the everyday occurrences of human life, afflictions, losses, injuries, contempt, raileries, and the other sufferings which the order of nature, or the malice of men obliges him to endure, he is only required to bear these crosses patiently to the end.

God permits us to defend ourselves from the evil which is about to befall us, and teaches us to use the means to guard against sickness, and to deliver ourselves from other sufferings; but he wishes, that when we cannot deliver ourselves from them, we should suffer them with patience, without murmuring, vengeance, hatred and chagrin; and he promises us great recompense if we suffer patiently for love of him. It is on this account that St. Paul says: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."*

* Rom. 8th chap., 18th verse.

These three things contain, in abridgment, all that is necessary to be done for our salvation, and to acquire continual merits for Heaven. It was this elevated the blessed Virgin to the pinnacle of merit at which she arrived; for she done no more than avoid sin, and offer faithfully to God all the actions of her life, and suffer, with great patience, the different calamities which she had to endure. Learn to do the same thing, in order to have part of her recompense.

FIRST.—*What a good Christian ought to do every year, every month, and every week of his life.*

The Christian who desires to be faithful to God, and to advance in virtue, will renew his Baptismal promises every year, with particular preparation. For this purpose he will choose the day on which he had been baptized, or some convenient festival. He will speak or pass over in his mind the promises which he made to God; he will examine the faults

which he has committed against these promises; he asks pardon for them, and resolves to be faithful to them during the remainder of his life; he incites himself to them by the consideration of the graces which God has given him, the promises which he has already made him, if he is faithful, and the sufferings which menace him if he fails to fulfil them. By this means he prepares himself for a good confession and a good communion. In order that his confession might be the more worthy, after having accused himself of the sins committed since his last confession, he accuses himself anew of all those for the whole year, and after communion, he renews his promises in a manner which we shall afterwards show, or in saying, simply, "Lord, I thank thee for the grace of Baptism: I ask pardon of all my infidelities, and the assistance which may be necessary for me to be more faithful; I renounce Satan with all my heart, and all his works and pomps, and I desire to spend the remainder of my life in your service."

A good Christian approaches the sacraments monthly, if his state in life permits

him; and, if he cannot approach them so often, he fails not to do it on all the principal festivals of the year. He will recommend the same thing to those of his household.

The faithful Christian attends mass on every Sunday and holiday of obligation; and always the principal mass, if he is not prevented by giving an opportunity to some of his household, or some other necessity. He likewise attends at vespers, at the sermon, and at the *Angelical Salutation* as often as he can. Knowing that festivals are instituted for the purpose of affording leisure to attend to the service of God and to the affairs of our salvation, he avoids most strenuously every sin, and all dangerous diversions which he would not partake in on working days; because, that sins committed during Sundays and festivals, are more grievous than those which we fall into on working days. If he does not approach the sacrament of penance, he makes an interior confession of the sins which he may have committed during the week; and he does this at the commencement of mass, in order to obtain from God remission

of them through the merits of the holy sacrifice. The Priest ascends to the foot of the altar, and repeats the general confession to remind all present that they should likewise confess their sins to God, and ask his pardon and his grace to spend the following week as good Christians.

At the elevation of the Sacred Host and Chalice, he prostrates himself in adoration before our Lord Jesus Christ, and asks of him anew, through the merits of his passion, pardon for his sins and the grace which he stands most in need of.

While the Priest communicates, those who do not receive the Blessed Sacrament should endeavor to communicate spiritually, and for this purpose they should humble themselves before God, as they are not in a state to approach the holy Table, and to supplicate our Saviour not to deprive them of the grace given to those who communicate monthly. Our Lord always communicates with those who pray with faith, humility, confidence, and love. This is called a spiritual communion.

SECOND.—*What a good Christian should do every day.*

Every morning, the good Christian, when he rises, calling to mind the presence of God, gives his first thoughts to him, and that he watches over him during the night.

Then remembering, that during the night's repose, he was unconscious even of his own existence, and he awakes as if born anew, he gives his first thoughts to God, thanking him for this second birth, and says; my God, I thank thee for having, as it were, created me anew, after I have been as if I had not yet been born; I wish to offer myself and all my actions of this day to you; in fine, he gives to God his first action by making the sign of the cross before he rises. On arising he sprinkles himself with holy water, and casting himself on his knees makes his morning prayer, unless that he can immediately go to the Church, or to some place where prayer is made in common; for then he can defer it until he arrives at the Church, or the place destined for prayer in common.

In his morning prayers he recites the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Creed, the Confiteor, the *Miseriater Indulgenceum*, the Commandments of God, and of the Church, and the prayer to his Guardian Angel. Afterwards he offers to God the labors of the day, and resigns himself to bear patiently the sufferings which may occur to him, beginning and ending his prayer with the sign of the cross.

When he hears the sound of the Salutation, he recites the Angelus, or he recites three Hail Mary's to unite his intention to that of the Church, which instituted it for us, to obtain of God the fruits of the incarnation, passion, and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

If convenient, he attends Mass, and assisting at it devoutly, he offers it to God in union with Jesus Christ, who offers himself to his Father for us. If he cannot go to Mass, he fails not to unite himself in heart and thought with those who are present at it.

This practice enables him to have a part in the holy sacrifice through the communion of

saints, which renders us partakers of the prayers and good works which are done in the Church, if we desire to participate in them.

After having rendered to God his duties, he attends to the business of his state of life, renewing, from time to time, the offering which he made to God, and taking care to do nothing which may displease his Divine Majesty. If he has children or domestics, he obliges them to acquit themselves properly of their pious duties, and he watches cautiously over their conduct. He never fails to offer to God his prayers before and after meals.

Every night he prays on his knees, in which after having repeated the same prayers which he had offered to God in the morning, he thanks him for the graces which he received from him during the day; he examines himself on the sins which he may have committed; he asks pardon of God, promises to confess them, and to commit them no more; in fine, he offers to God the repose of the night, and he retires to bed, after having sprinkled himself with holy water, with the sign of the cross.

The head of a family, who leads a good Christian life, will not fail to assemble all the members of his household to unite in prayer every evening, in which time should be given to examine the sins committed during the day, and at the end, read some pious meditation, for the instruction and edification of those present.

CHAPTER X.

Other practices during the life of a Christian, for those whose convenience will permit them.

EVERY year they make a spiritual retreat, according to the advice of their director, and in this retreat, firstly; they are careful to purify their consciences from every sin, by a good confession, and by making a review of the whole year. Secondly; taking care to examine their faults, in order to correct them, and the virtues which they need, in order that

they may labor to acquire them. Thirdly, and finally; they endeavor to accustom themselves to perform all the actions of the day well, from the time they rise in the morning until they retire at night. They confess and communicate monthly, or oftener, if their convenience and advancement in virtue allows it. Some confess every two weeks, and others every week; and communicate as often as their confessor considers prudent. Every week they perform some act of mortification, as fasting or abstinence.

They devote a certain portion of each day for the exercise of piety, and after morning prayer they make a meditation of half an hour: they assist at Mass. After dinner they read a lesson from the lives of the Saints or other work recommended by their confessor, and recite the rosary, and after night prayer they make a general examination of the sins of the day, and a particular examination of the vices which they wish to subdue, or of the virtues which they wish to acquire; unless they are accustomed to make this examination at another time.

Some recite the title and office of the blessed Virgin, or other vocal prayers; but that which is most important for those who wish to lay up treasures for the other life, is to remember that God is continually present with them, and to consecrate to Him all their actions, and to make frequently acts of love, of confidence, of contrition, of humility, of resignation, and the like, and to bear with patience the sufferings of life, and particularly those which result from their neighbor's imperfections, which are the effects of his disposition, his faults, or his malice. These crosses which come to us through the failings of our neighbors, if borne with patience for the love of God, merit more than all the mortifications of the body.

CHAPTER XI.

The renewal of the promises of Baptism.

WE may renew our Baptismal promises either in private or in public. To make this renewal in private, it is sufficient to say: "I renounce Satan, his works and pomps, and I give myself to you, Oh, my God! to serve you all my life, through faith, hope and charity, and in perfect submission to all your commandments."

This renewal can be made every morning, or at any other time; but particularly when you are attacked with any evil thought or other like temptation.

Besides this daily renewal, it is very useful to make a general one every month. You can choose for it the day of your Baptism, or any other festival. In order to prepare for it, it is necessary to confess, not only the sins committed since your last confession, but those which you may have committed through the year, detesting them as contrary to the

promises made in Baptism. It is necessary to communicate on this day, if your confessor judges it prudent, and read the explanation of the promises which you made in Baptism, if you have not read them before confession—which is the proper time—in order to know the better the faults which you should the more expressly renounce.

It is also necessary to read in this book, or some other, the things which are capable of exciting in your heart the esteem and love of these holy vows, and to regret the faults which you may have committed. For the more the heart is touched, the more salutary and durable will be the renewal.

Knowing these salutary effects, many persons make it a practice to read and meditate for many days those things which regard the promises of Baptism, previous to the renewal of them. The preparation being completed, the promises should be renewed in reading this, which follows, or some other formula which may be found better. There is an excellent one in the introduction to “a Devout Life,” first part, chapter 20.

FORMULA FOR THE RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL
VOWS.

My God ! I thank you with my whole heart that, after having created me and sent me into the world, you have created me as if anew, in giving me your grace and making me your child and a member of your Church. I then protested, by the mouth of another, that I renounced Satan and his works and pomps ; and that I believed in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost ; the holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, and all the other truths which you have revealed ; and finally, that I wished to live according to this belief and to your holy Commandments. But Oh my God ! I have hardly fulfilled these holy promises ; I have permitted myself to be seduced by the temptations of the devil ; I have done the works of Satan in committing sin ; I have esteemed, loved and sought after the pomps of the devil, which are the pleasures and the vanities of the world ; I desired more the riches, honors, the friend-

ship of men, and the other treasures of the earth, than the spiritual and eternal good which you promise to your children. In place of loving you above all things, I have preferred vile creatures; in place of living only for you, and of consecrating to you my thoughts, my words, and my actions, I have lived only for myself, and I have sought only my own gratification; I have violated your holy laws, those of the Church, and of my other superiors. I acknowledge now the enormity of my faults, and I ask your pardon, supplicating your divine mercy to wash them away, through the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ, your Son.

Deign to permit me to renew, on this day, the same promises which I made you at the moment of Baptism. I am resolved to preserve them with all possible fidelity. I now renounce Satan anew, with all his works and pomps. I will never again give ear to him, nor to those who hold communication with him. I will shield myself, with the fear of falling into pride, avarice, impurity, gluttony,

anger, lying, flattery, and all the other sins, which are but the works of Satan.

I will be careful to purify my heart from a love of riches, of luxuries, of honors, and the pleasures of the world. These are the pomps of the devil, under which this enemy of our souls conceives the sin which he desires us to commit. I will consider, hereafter, the vanity and the folly of all these false goods, in order to detach my heart perfectly from them, and desire to have no other attachment than for you. O, my God! thou who art my sovereign good—a good infinite, eternal, immutable! Yes, my Lord! I desire to live and to die in the faith, the hope, the love, the obedience, which I have promised you. I believe all these things which you have revealed to your Church, which is the holy Roman Apostolic and Catholic Church. I hold as true all which she teaches, and reject all which she condemns. I will no more place my happiness nor my hopes in the goods of this world, nor in any creature.

In you alone, O, my God, I place my happiness; you, alone, are the object of my

hopes ! I shall employ the remainder of my life to merit the joy of your presence during eternity. I desire to love you with my whole spirit, with my whole soul, with my whole heart, and with all that is in me. I consecrate to you, here present, my thoughts, my desires, my actions, my body, my soul, my being, and all that I have ; and I am determined to do all that I can for thy glory, and according to thy will. I wish to love thee above all things ; and neither life, nor death, nor the hope of good, nor the fear of evil, nor friends, nor enemies, nor any creature, shall ever make me violate the fidelity which I owe you. I submit to your commandments, and those of your Church, and to all those whom you have given command over me, and, in this disposition, I am resolved to live and die. But, as it is you who have inspired my heart, and as I cannot persevere in it, or execute the least resolution, without the assistance of your grace, grant me this grace, so necessary for me.

Renew in me the spirit of faith, of hope, of charity, of piety, of humility, and the

other virtues which you communicated to me in Baptism, that, being fortified by them, I may overcome the weight of concupiscence, which urges me to sin, surmount the other enemies of my salvation, and preserve the fidelity which I have come to promise you. This I beg from your infinite bounty, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and through the intercession of the most blessed and immaculate Virgin and all your Saints.

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